

Haybridge High School and Sixth Form

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116933
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326494
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Middleton HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1251
Sixth form	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Antony Homer
Headteacher	Caroline Hoddinott
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
School address	Brake Lane Hagley Stourbridge DY8 2XS
Telephone number	01562 886213
Fax number	01562 887002

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and response to the previous inspection which asked the school to continue to strengthen the innovative and energising educational provision. Evidence was gathered through review of school documentation, discussions with senior and middle leaders, other staff, students, and the chair of governors. Inspectors visited an assembly, tutor period, sample of lessons across the school, and also staff meetings led by the students. All aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than the average secondary school. The majority of students are White British. A much lower than average proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. Few students are eligible for free school meals. The proportions of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or have a statement of special educational need are well below average. The school has several achievement awards, for example: Healthy Schools, The ICT Mark, Eco School, and NACE award for work with gifted and talented students. The school is a specialist school with technology status, and vocational and sport as second specialisms. Foundation status was achieved in 2007. The school is a Training School and in the Leading Edge Partnership.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Haybridge High School and Sixth Form provides an outstanding standard of education. Just as the striking new buildings blend contemporary design with practicality, the ethos is a very successful mix of innovation and traditional values, personalisation and collaboration, open enjoyment and high achievement.

The commitment of staff and students ensure there is no complacency about the school's reputation as an excellent school. Students enter the school with above average attainment, achieve well in their Key Stage 3 tests a year early, and leave having achieved exceptionally high standards in their examinations. In 2008, 95% of Year 11 students achieved five or more higher grades at GCSE, 85% including English and mathematics, exceeding the school's challenging targets. Even taking account of students' favourable starting points, the progress made by different groups of students puts the school continually within the top 10% nationally. Achievement in mathematics is exceptionally high. Analysis of individual students' progress also indicates that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress equally well in achieving their personal targets. The relentless drive to ensure that all students do as well as they can includes a plethora of strategies and a current focus on students with particular gifts and talents. In addition to examination success, high levels of participation and performance in sports, music and other awards are also evident.

Students' personal development is outstanding. They are confident but modest, take their work seriously but also contribute to making learning fun. Inspectors observed nothing but exemplary behaviour and the school has very good systems for supporting this. Attendance is well above average. Students are enthusiastic about coming to school because they value opportunities to work with their teachers and other students. Nevertheless, they know how important independence and initiative are to their future education and careers. In all years, students take their responsibilities seriously in lessons and around school. Whilst students are clear about which staff to go to if there is anything they need to discuss, they also trust their peers with very few reported problems. This contributes significantly to the quality of learning because students show little fear of failure when contributing to discussion or tackling something new. The high profile given to 'students' voice' across the school also develops a strong sense of being part of a safe and supportive school community within which they have influence. This was evident in the staff meetings observed by inspectors when students offered feedback about how they learn best.

The school's contribution to community cohesion more widely also supports students' personal development extremely well. Effective use of outside agencies, work with other schools and colleges through specialist status and sixth form collaboration, add to the wide range of initiatives that integrate the school and local community. Whilst senior staff are mindful of the fact that students' awareness of the school in the context of others nationally could be strengthened, curriculum links with the global community are embedded. Recent curriculum development has also moved inclusion in the school forward, enabling students with a wider range of abilities and aptitudes to succeed, particularly in the sixth form when a significant proportion of students join the school, bringing a diverse range of experiences. In the specialist subjects, work with students while still at primary school also enables them to build quickly on their diverse experiences in Year 7. The 'small school' ethos in Years 7 and 8 and introduction of linked learning across a group of subjects are also facilitating students' progression by focusing on transferable skills across subjects. Personalised programmes for students able to

pursue different pathways to accreditation contribute to an outstanding curriculum. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire supported the new curriculum initiatives but a small minority remained unclear about the reasons for change.

Teaching and learning are outstanding overall, all faculties containing some areas of excellence. Senior leaders promote a strong focus on learning with an emphasis on well-planned lessons that actively engage students. In the lessons visited, teacher talk was kept to a minimum and the focus was on enabling the students to develop their skills as learners. In a technology lesson the teacher skilfully used a range of students' work to propose different alternatives to achieving high grades, avoiding the impression that success meant following a formula. In several science lessons, students were confident about experimenting or hypothesising, reassured by their teachers' expertise. Teachers work to their strengths, including prior expertise with particular year groups before the school was re-organised as an 11 to 18 school. Teachers and students are eager to learn. A successful culture of sharing effective teaching and learning approaches exists at all levels, including the stimulus provided by trainee teachers as part of the school's status as a training school. Whilst some instances of inconsistency remain, for example marking, there are also examples of strong and coherent approaches across the school. For example, all staff observed reviewed, revisited and reinforced students' learning expertly. Support, care and guidance are outstanding. Students' well-being underpins school policies, improvement priorities and the trusting, respectful relationships that exist between staff and students. Regular feedback to students and their parents helps to keep students on track, complemented by swift contact with parents and outside agencies if further follow-up is required. But the wide range of informal opportunities to welcome parents into the work of the school is impressive too, soon to be enhanced with access to additional information and support materials from home through information and communication technology (ICT). The school fulfils all requirements for the safeguarding of students. Excellent academic guidance is complemented by provision that effectively promotes students' emotional and economic well-being, safe and healthy lifestyle, cultural development and citizenship.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding at all levels. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have set the school in a clear and aspirational direction while taking staff, students and parents fully onboard in choosing the most appropriate and effective routes to take. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate, based on a comprehensive range of evidence including systematic monitoring, and is well informed by challenges and opportunities in the world outside school. This is reflected in entrepreneurialism, business-like efficiency and professionalism that respects the need for adults to look forward to coming to work in order that students can look forward to enthusiastic and energetic teaching and support. The quality of students' learning is paramount to all staff. Clear targets, sharp prioritisation and judicious use of resources underpin the school's effectiveness, an example being the impact of specialist status as a driver for innovation and continuous improvement. The school has exceptional capacity for continued improvement and its aim to develop as a 'world class' school is within its reach.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students with a wide range of prior attainment and experience are welcomed into the sixth form through an excellent range of courses. Their diverse interests, needs and aspirations are met very well. All groups make outstanding progress and exceptional standards are achieved. High quality academic, course and careers guidance and support are continuous from the start.

Strong leadership and effective teaching contribute to a supportive, challenging and collegiate ethos. The maturity of students' personal development, and their impact on the whole school, is impressive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop students' individual qualities, special gifts and unique talents to the full in order to flourish as a 'world class' school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Haybridge High School and Sixth Form, Stourbridge DY8 2XS

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I appreciated the opportunity to share your achievements and together with my colleague, talk to you in discussion groups, lessons and during activities after school. Your views, and those of your parents, were very helpful in evaluating the evidence provided by staff and confirming their view that Haybridge is an outstanding school.

Particular strengths of your school are:

- you enjoy the ethos of a school that is innovative but also has traditional values
- your school is led and managed very effectively and resources are used efficiently
- your school focuses well on your learning in lessons and your progress over time
- you have an excellent choice of courses and extra-curricular opportunities
- you attain very high standards, examination results and other achievements
- your sixth form is expanding rapidly and students are achieving excellent results
- you appreciate and receive high quality of care, guidance and support from staff
- your relationships with teachers and peers are mutually respectful and supportive
- you make an excellent contribution to the school and the local community
- your parents, carers and the governors are ambitious for you and your school.

You could add to your school's aim to become 'world class' by:

- developing your individual qualities, special gifts and unique talents to the full.

I wish you continued enjoyment and success at Haybridge High School and Sixth Form.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton Her Majesty's Inspector